



NORTH DAKOTA
DEPARTMENT *of* HEALTH

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:
Aug. 17, 2004

For More Information, Contact:
Stacy Eberl
Public Information Coordinator
North Dakota Department of Health
Phone: 701.328.4619
E-mail: sleberl@state.nd.us

MEDIA ADVISORY

State Health Department Reports 497 Cases of Whooping Cough (News Release Follows Below)

BISMARCK, N.D. – To answer media questions about whooping cough (pertussis) activity in the state, the North Dakota Department of Health will hold a telephone media availability Tuesday, Aug. 17, 2004, at 1 p.m. The following department officials will participate in the 1 p.m. conference call:

- Larry Shireley, state epidemiologist
- Heather Weaver, Immunization Program manager
- Molly Sander, Immunization Surveillance coordinator

To connect to the conference call, the media is asked to follow these steps:

- 1) Dial 866.262.1846.
- 2) Once you are connected, enter *3282378*. (Please note: The star key must be pressed before and after the pin number.)
- 3) If you have trouble connecting, call the help desk at 800.263.3863 option 2.

Members of the media who wish to attend in person can meet at 1 p.m. in the conference room located in room 206 on the second floor of the Judicial Wing in the State Capitol Building, Bismarck, N.D.

Weekly conference calls with the media will be held each Tuesday as warrants. For more information about the conference call, contact Stacy Eberl at 701.328.4619.

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600 E. Boulevard Ave. Dept. 301, Bismarck, North Dakota 58505-0200
Phone: 701.328.2372 Fax: 701.328.4727 E-mail: health@state.nd.us

Visit the health department home page at www.ndhealth.gov.

State Health Department Reports 497 Cases of Whooping Cough

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Health today announced that 497 cases of whooping cough (pertussis) have been reported in the state. This number reflects cases identified since June 22, 2004.

The following is a breakdown by county of whooping cough cases reported to the department:

Adams – 1	McIntosh – 2	Sargent – 3
Barnes – 3	McLean – 19	Stark – 5
Benson – 19	Mercer – 16	Stutsman – 3
Burleigh – 51	Morton – 6	Traill – 1
Cass – 33	Mountrail – 4	Walsh – 1
Divide – 1	Pierce – 4	Ward – 250
Dunn – 1	Ramsey – 1	Wells – 10
Grand Forks – 28	Ransom – 3	Williams – 8
McHenry – 14	Rolette – 10	

Because of a delay in receiving supplies, the Department of Health's Public Health Laboratory has been unable to conduct tests for whooping cough since August 13. However, tests are expected to resume today or tomorrow. As a result, updated numbers will not be available until later this week. Updated whooping cough numbers generally are posted by noon Monday through Friday on the North Dakota Department of Health's Disease Control website at www.health.state.nd.us/disease.

The following fact sheet provides information about whooping cough. For more information, the public can call 800.472.2180 or a local public health unit.

Facts About Whooping Cough

Whooping cough (pertussis) is a contagious disease that lasts for many weeks and causes severe coughing with a “whooping” sound or coughing that leads to vomiting. The disease can be life threatening for infants and can cause moderate illness in adults.

Whooping cough is characterized by one or more of the following symptoms:

- Prolonged cough (lasting for a week or more)
- Long spells of coughing with spasms
- Coughing with a whooping sound
- Coughing that leads to gagging or vomiting

People who have any of the above symptoms should contact their health-care provider to be evaluated for whooping cough. **People who do not have any symptoms do not need to be tested.** Tests are conducted by inserting two nasal swabs into the back of a person's nasal passage. The test is uncomfortable and not necessary unless the person is showing symptoms.

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The Department of Health urges people to take the following protective measures:

- Frequent hand washing with soap and water. Hand washing is one of the best preventive measures, not only for whooping cough, but for all diseases.
- Using good respiratory manners. Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when sneezing or coughing.
- Staying home from work or other recreational activities when you're ill. Individuals who see their doctor and are treated with antibiotics can return to work after five days. This will help prevent the spread of whooping cough to your friends, coworkers and family. Those who work directly with infants should not work while sick. Young babies do not have protection from the virus and it can be life threatening for them.

Children younger than 7 should be vaccinated to help prevent them from contracting the disease. Parents should contact their health-care providers if they have questions about their child's vaccination status. Children can receive their first vaccination against whooping cough when they are 6 weeks old. No vaccine is available for adults or children age 7 and older.

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Please note: To access archived news releases and other information, visit the North Dakota Department of Health Press Room at www.nddohpressroom.gov.